

BOOK REVIEW

ZOMLEFER, WENDY B. 1994. **Guide to Flowering Plants Families.** (ISBN 0-8078-2160-8, hbk.; ISBN 0-8078-4470-5, pbk.). The University of North Carolina Press, Chapel Hill and London. \$55.00 (hbk); \$27.50 (pbk). 430 pp., 165 text figures, 302 glossary figures, 22 tables, 2 appendices.

Rarely are the talents of a superb botanical illustrator and a qualified botanist combined in one person. Wendy Zomlefer is such a person, and her *Guide to Flowering Plant Families* is proof. Even a quick perusal of the illustrations shows them to be accurate, botanically significant, life-like, and crisp. The book is intended to be adopted as a laboratory manual or atlas of flowering plant families for a college/universities plant systematics or field botany course; although, it also makes a very nice reference for professionals and enthusiasts, as well.

Approximately 325 pages are devoted to 130 family treatments consisting of 1) full page plates illustrating whole plants, details, dissections, and even diagnostic anatomical features; 2) a written diagnosis and important characters; 3) lists of important genera; 4) distribution; 5) economic members, 6) and commentaries on reproductive biology and phylogenetic problems and/or current studies.

The choice of taxa illustrated focuses on warm temperate and tropical U.S. representatives (a few cultivated ones also) to aid students in mentally generalizing from typical members of the family. Often, several taxa showing the range of variation are illustrated. Of special interest is the inclusion of tropical families usually left out of an introductory course but which are of major world wide importance, notably the Lauraceae, Sapotaceae, Sterculiaceae, Bombacaceae, Rhizophoraceae, Malpighiaceae, Rutaceae, Meliaceae, Sapindaceae, Combretaceae, Myrtaceae, Bignoniaceae, Palmae, Bromeliaceae, Zingiberaceae, and Marantaceae.

The book has several added bonuses for the student. First and foremost is an illustrated glossary showing structures of real species (cross referenced to the family plate), not some diagrammatic idealization. Secondly, in Appendix B is a complete chart comparing each family in term of size, distribution, vegetative habit, floral formula, fruit types, and any special diagnostic field characters. Also, there are introductory chapters on 1) illustration techniques and floral diagrams, and 2) cladistic concepts that are important in understanding the commentary. Because she has adopted Thorne's system (which she defends well), Cronquist's system is outlined in Appendix A as a cross reference.

In summary, this comprehensive atlas is up-to-date, well drawn, well planned, and user-friendly. It is highly recommended as a supplement to a text on systematic principles or as a general reference in every botanist's library.—Roger W. Sanders.